

OKOLONA MESSENGER.

Democratic in Principle, But Independent in Thought and Action. Devoted to Honesty, Truth and Good Government.

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NO. 10

W. M. COX MAKES STATEMENTS RELATIVE TO SCHOOL AFFAIRS AT OKOLONA

To the Friends and Patrons of Okolona Public Schools:-

Despite the fact that our genial editor has many times offered us space in his columns to tell of the activities of our school, we have preferred going on quietly and letting our patrons find out for themselves what we were doing for their boys and girls.

Now we feel that since so much unfair criticism is going the rounds, in defense of ourselves and for the good of our school, we must make some statements.

In the first place I want to say that I am not in any political fight and I positively refuse to discuss any questions of a political nature. Neither am I willing to defend or to criticize any city official or any one seeking a political job. Our school is not in politics and I earnestly appeal to all the friends of our school to do everything in their power to keep it out of politics.

The question has come to me from all sides "Will we have nine months school for this year?" My answer is, "I see no reason why we should not have nine months school." It is true we will have a deficit of about \$1600.00 at the close of this year (if we run the full nine months) due to a falling down of about \$600.00 in State revenue, a decrease of about \$200,000.00 in personal property, and the adding of one teacher to faculty after budget was made out. But do not allow yourself to get alarmed about this because the first item on our budget the year after I came back from Macon was \$1450.00, carried as deficit from the preceding year. I doubt whether ten people in Okolona knew this happened and I am sure it did not affect our school the next year.

In answer to rumor No. 2, "How about the exorbitant salary Cox is being paid, and why is the school tax so much more in Okolona than in other towns?" I submit the following data for the school year 1921-22:

School	Levy	Supt. Salary	Salary H.S. Teacher	Salary Gram. S.T.
Aberdeen	12	\$3000.00	\$1050.00	\$ 922.00
Amory	11	3000.00	1096.00	855.00
Columbus	8	3600.00	1350.00	1000.00
Holly Springs	8	3600.00	1075.00	980.00
Houston	15	2750.00	1008.00	855.00
New Albany	21	3600.00	1125.00	900.00
Water Valley	15	3600.00	990.00	925.00
Tupelo	9	3200.00	1125.00	900.00
West Point	8	3600.00	1140.00	900.00
Okolona	10	3000.00	1275.00	1039.00
Av. for 10 Schools	11.7	3295.00	1123.4	927.6

After I came to Okolona, the first census report, made out by Mr. Dendy, County Assessor, and turned over to Mr. Riley, County Superintendent, was 1089 pupils, 307 pupils were added to this list by me at an expense of \$20.00 to school. These 307 pupils brought our school district \$3070.00 more from the State treasurer than we would have gotten from the 1089 pupils. When the last school census was turned over to County Superintendent Riley by County Assessor Wooldridge, there were 1105 children on list. At an expense of less than \$20.00 I added to this list 680 pupils, which meant \$10880.00 that we get from Jackson for school purposes in excess of what we would have gotten from 1105 pupils. Add to this

amount \$1700.00 that we get this year from Okolona Consolidated School and we have a total of \$15,650.00. For the entire eight years I have taught in Okolona I have received \$15,850.00. Subtract these two amounts and you will find the tax payers of Okolona have paid me \$200.00 or \$25.00 per year for my services.

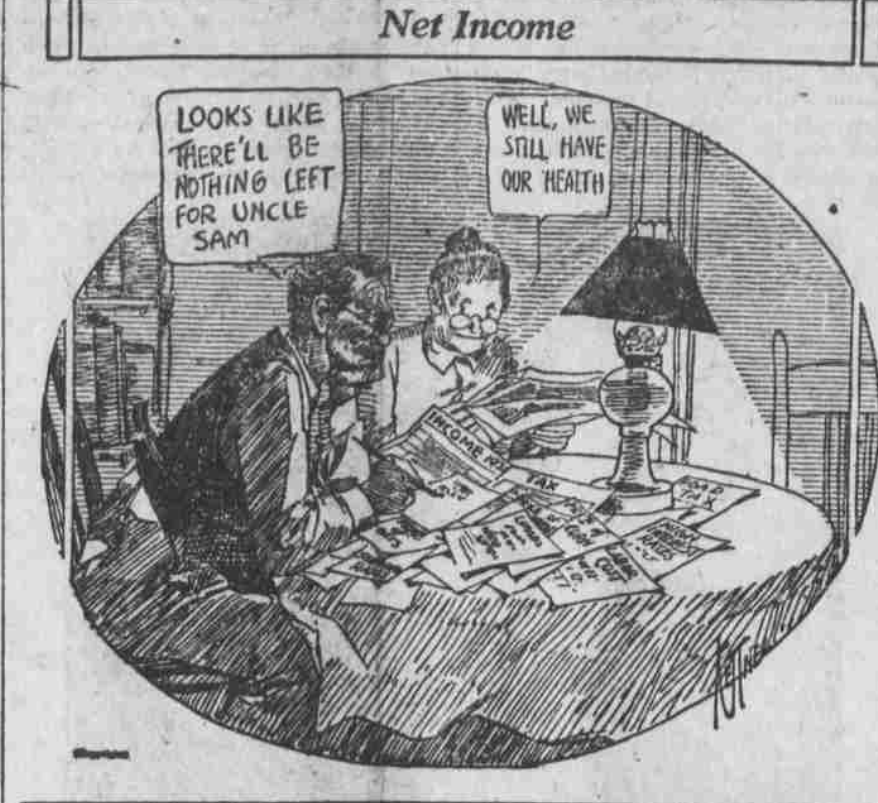
If any one questions these statements I will furnish him affidavits to ever one of them. Has any tax payer got a right to knock when a man is teaching for \$295.00 per year below the average salary paid men in similar positions in Northeast Mississippi, and when he by his own efforts from outside sources pays all his salary but \$25.00 per year?

Since we have begun to make public statements we had as well tell it all and be done with it. Every taxpayer in Okolona ought to know that the third year I was in Okolona I brought to the City Council \$500,000.00 worth of property to be added to our School District and do you know when I heard a member of the city council make a motion to table that petition for 12 months, I almost sweat drops of blood while they were discussing it? And but for the support given it by Mr. Sherman Adams, then a member of the city council, I am sure it would have been defeated. It was carried and you now have one and a half million dollars worth of property to tax for school purposes instead of the one million you would have but for this added territory.

I am sure some philosopher is ready to say, "If you have saved the tax payers of Okolona \$32,650.00 as you say in the last eight years, how in the name of common sense can you account for the increase in the school levy from 3 1/2 mills in 1914 to 10 mills in 1921?" Here is my answer. In 1914 Okolona teachers were paid on an average of \$60.00 per month and they taught about 50 children per teacher. Now they draw on

an average of \$120.00 per month and teach about 25 pupils per teacher, so if you will double 3 1/2 mills for price of teacher it makes 7 mills and double this amount for number of teachers and you will have a 14 mill levy then add to this 2 or 3 more mills to take care of building, coal, and other incidental expenses which were paid out of general fund in 1914, and you have a school levy of 16 or 17 mills instead of the 10 mills we are now paying. This is where the \$32,650.00 comes in to help the tax payers.

If you ask me why the School Board resigned, I will say, "Ask them." You probably knew they had resigned before I did. "That is none of my affair."



But if, you tell me "They can spend school money without giving any account for same," I will tell you, "You are mistaken." Before our City Clerk will draw a warrant for one cent of money for school purposes other than teachers salaries he must have an order from the School Board stating for what said money was to be paid out. And before he can draw a warrant to a teacher he must have a certificate from the County Superintendent stating the exact amount of each warrant, and for what month's service it is issued. Go look at vouchers written by City Clerk and see if they do not state what the money was paid out for. Then go to file of Secretary of School Board and see if he can not furnish you with the original bill with every item stated and dated. This false idea has probably grown out of the idea which is true that the School Board is not responsible to city council for the money it spends, neither is it optional with city council as to whether or not they shall make levy asked for by the School Board for maintenance of Public Schools. The only charge that you can make against city council relative to school is that they did not place the right men on School Board.

There seems to be a persistent rumor that the School Board appropriated \$7000.00 last year for permanent improvements—that a primary building was constructed from this fund and the remainder was used for athletic purposes. The truth of the matter is that they appropriated \$5600.00 for permanent improvement: \$2300.00 was spent on primary building, \$2300.00 on negro public school building and \$1000.00 for seats at the white public school. If you hear persons talking about the character of work being done in Okolona High School and hear them say "They are spending so much time in athletics they do not accomplish much in literary lines," please tell them that if they will get the records of our pupils for the past four years in Vanderbilt, Tulane, University of Alabama, Sophia Newcomb and each of the best Colleges of Mississippi, they will find that Okolona pupils are among the leading students in each of these universities.

For the last two years in inter-scholastic contests in East Mississippi Meet, Okolona High School led them all in points in athletics one year, but led them all in literary points both years. These things do not happen by chance, they are the inevitable result of plans made out and worked out by some individual. Before you make any more such

criticisms on Okolona School, please come up and see what we are doing and you may relieve us of this unpleasant task of having to publish what we have done.

As to the complaint that "John King gets \$1800.00 per year to do nothing but play with boys," also "That he get \$450.00 last summer to do nothing but play baseball," When our School Board decided that in view of the fact that our school had grown so much larger and the other duties of Superintendent had increased so much that he did not have the time to look after the recreation of our boys, I went to Mississippi University, A. and M. College, Milsaps College and Mississippi College at my own expense and had a personal interview with every young man whom the heads of those colleges could recommend to me for our work.

Their prices ranged from \$1800.00 to \$2400.00 per year. John King agreed to come for \$1600.00 the first year, provided we would make it \$1800.00 the second year if he made good. He made good and we were obligated to pay him \$1800.00 the second year if we kept him, so our School Board said we will make him work 12 months instead of nine. We would have had to pay him the same salary for nine months that we did for twelve so I cannot see how he was paid one cent to play baseball. Now if you imagine he does nothing but play with the boys just shadow him for one day, follow him through the six classes he teaches, out on the field after school, and then go with him to his room at night and see him prepare lessons and grade papers until midnight. I know what I am talking about because I paid for the electricity he burned last year.

At the last meeting of our School Board I recommended a cut in every salary on the school pay roll. The total amount cut recommended by me was \$4327. for next year. I do not believe more than this can be cut without materially hurting the efficiency of our school.

I am not near through yet. While some of you are spending your time loafing on the street corners "Cussing Cox." I am racking my brains for more ways to raise more money to do more things for the boys and girls of Okolona.

If the All Wise Ruler of the Universe should summon me to leave this earthly realm and come to my final reward, there are but two things in my life that I would long to be permitted to remain until I could complete. The one of course first in my heart would be to live until I

Card of Thanks

In the midst of our sorrow and heartache we are still mindful of the sympathy and devotion of many kind friends. Through the press we wish publicity to thank these friends for these thoughtful attentions that contributed much to our comfort and these evidences of love and sympathy which sustained us in our hour of sore bereavement.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Herndon and family
Mr. J. M. Lloyd

In referring to the Cadman-Tsianina Concert William Conrad Mills, of Phoenix, Arizona, said: "Several Patrons of the concert expressed their willingness to pay \$5.00 a seat to hear the concert repeated." You can hear it for \$1.00 plus war tax on March 15th at School Auditorium.

A Railroad Monopoliest.
"Pa," said Johnny on the afternoon of Christmas.

"Well, my son?"
"Why didn't you ask Santa Claus to bring you one of those electric trains if you like to play with it so much?"—Boston Transcript.

Rural Community Best.
Civilization, culture and development of rural people are to be found in conjunction with town and small city, and not apart.—Galpin.

Companionship.
"Don't you feel sorry for the poor animal that was skinned for the fur you bought for your wife?"
"Why should I feel sorry for the quadruped? It's true he was skinned for those furs. But so was I."

Among the Tired Business Men.
"You no longer embellish your speeches with humorous anecdotes."
"I had to quit it," replied Senator Sorghum. "Audiences got to calling for funny stories instead of paying attention to my serious arguments."

City Zoning Spreads.
The chamber of commerce of Kansas City has recently heard the first official presentation of the work of the city planning commission of that city. The chamber has unanimously voted to make an intensive study of zoning principles and co-operate with the city plan commission.

Beauty in Trees.
When a small town starts civic beautification it can count on its trees having already done 50 per cent of the work.

But Not to a Girl.
She—And, Harold! you have never loved any other girl but me?
He—No, my love!
She—Yet somebody told me that you have been engaged once before!
He—Yes, but that was to a widow.

could see my four little ones educated, useful, christian men and women; next to this I would want to live long enough to see Okolona have a hundred thousand dollar High School building and know that it was the best school in Mississippi.

W. M. Cox.

HAMBONE'S MEDITATIONS

HIT'S HAND T' SAY WHICH IN DE WUS' FIX DESE TIMES--DE MAN WHUTS GOT SUMPH T' SELL, ER DE MAN WHUTS GOT T' BUY IT!



Market News

Hogs weighing 160 to 210 pounds are selling at 11 1/2 cents per pound on the St. Louis market. This means 10 cents or better for our fat hogs F. O. B. shipping point. The cattle market is gradually creeping up. A car of hogs from Pontotoc went to the St. Louis market February 28th and sold for 11 1/2 cents. Any one having corn will do well to feed this through hogs or steers. I will be glad to come and advise anyone in regard to the feeding out of your livestock.

Any one having hogs to market will please notify me as to number and size at once. Just drop me a card stating the number and your address so that I may notify you when to bring them in for shipment. If your neighbor has hogs tell him to send in his number. Let's get the co-operative habit on.

R. H. Rigby,
County Agent.

Negro Hanged by Citizens

Last Monday, just a little way over in Monroe, between this city and Aberdeen, Will Baker, an eighteen year old negro boy committed a criminal assault on the six year old daughter of Constable Sidney Johnson, and was taken away from officers between there and Aberdeen and swung up to a near by tree. The negro had been told to put a buggy in a shed a little way from the house, and as he went with it the little girl got in for a ride. Will took her to a near by cabin. Her screams attracted the attention of her mother who with help went to her relief and seized the negro and held him until other assistance arrived.

Trainman Killed

Mr. Jim Tacker, a brakeman on the north end, was killed here last Thursday night by a car that is said not to have been placed in clearance. He had been called out to make the run north and was on the side of the engine going down to the south yards where the train was placed after it was made up. In passing the car, he was struck and horribly mangled. However, he remained conscious and was carried to Tupelo to the hospital, but died soon after arriving there. His remains were shipped to Jackson, Tenn., his home.

Eva Clare Lodge Knights of Pythias

Eva Clare Lodge met Monday night at 7 P. M. Although the weather was disagreeable the attendance was fine. Seven applications were voted on, four given the rank of Page and two "accepted" the rank of Knight.

March 20th will mark the completion of 47 years of Pythian life in Okolona. On this date we hope to have a big banquet. If you do not know the Annual Password I would advise that you attend and let the Chancellor Commander deliver same to you before this date. You might need it in order to enter the banquet hall.

The rank of Esquire will be conferred next Monday night. Be sure that you attend.

Reporter.

Piles Cured in 6 to 14 Days
Druggists refund money if PAIN EXTERMINATOR fails to cure itching, bleeding, swelling or protruding Piles. Instantly relieves itching, pain, and you can get mental sleep after first application. 50c.